

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. made today the following statement about the passage of H.R. 2 -- the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization. Congressman Jackson joined with his colleagues to pass the measure in a bipartisan vote of 290 to 135.

"I am pleased and proud to offer my voice and vote to reflect the best of our country's values and virtues. In passing the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), we make good on a commitment to bring change to Washington and to provide the fundamental right to health care for more children.

"This bipartisan bill renews and improves SCHIP, providing health care coverage for 11 million children. The measure preserves coverage for the roughly 7 million children currently covered by SCHIP and extends coverage to 4.1 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for -- but not enrolled in -- SCHIP and Medicaid.

"In Illinois, about 345,500 children were enrolled in SCHIP in 2007. With this reauthorization, 159,000 more children now may be enrolled, reducing the number of uninsured children in the state by 54%.

"Since its creation more than 10 years ago, SCHIP has provided health care to children whose parents work full-time -- but can't afford private insurance and don't qualify for Medicaid. This bill allows millions more children who fall into this gap to not only visit the doctor when they are sick, but also see the doctor to stay well. In doing so, the legislation makes our children healthier, our families stronger and our nation better.

"Expanding SCHIP is a vital, first step in a larger, national effort -- to provide health care to every single American. Clearly, the time for universal health care coverage is now. -30-